

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

For many years, the citizens in the unincorporated area have benefited from the work of the Department of Regional Planning. This department has taken an active role in facilitating economic development and in supporting business retention efforts through the timely processing of land development permits. To meet these needs the Board has consistently maintained planning and zoning services to our communities to protect the health and safety of our citizens while recognizing the rights of property owners to develop their land in a timely manner.

The pending workload in the Department of Regional Planning has resulted in an unacceptable level of service at the downtown public counter and at the nine regional field offices where Regional Planning staff are available. Unlike many other jurisdictions that staff their public counters on a full-time basis, Regional Planning public counter is only open during the afternoons. Additionally, Regional Planning employees are available in the nine field office on a limited basis, in some instances only one half-day per week (one of these offices, located in Lancaster, is a seventy-mile drive from downtown Los Angeles). This condition must not be allowed to continue since the economic impacts on our business community and housing market would be too great.

To address this issue, the Department of Regional Planning has already identified priority needs for fiscal year 2003-04 in a letter addressed to this Board on May 14, 2003. To appropriately address the immediate need for more case intake and counseling resources, Regional Planning has requested additional funding for to expand its ability to provide zoning counseling and planning advisory services at the downtown public counter and in the field offices.

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The funding will increase the service hours at the downtown public information counter by extending hours to include mornings. The funding will significantly increase the service hours that planners are available in the nine field offices.

Funding for this effort will positively impact the department's ability to provide convenient, timely and courteous service and promote service excellence to residents in the unincorporated areas. This action will promote quality improvement and organizational effectiveness that responds to the vital role that the Department of Regional Planning plays in business retention and housing production. These measures will implement key reforms recommended in the recent management audit of the department and further implement further the department's strategic plan.

The expanded service hours will allow better service to our business community and property owners in the unincorporated area. The recommended action will also implement a portion of the recent management audit conducted in the department.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors authorize funding of \$160,000 in to the Regional Planning budget to support expanded service hours in the department's downtown headquarters, as well as funding of \$289,000 for additional staffing by the Department of Regional Planning in the nine field offices, for a total of \$449,000. The funding source for these allocations would be from the appropriation for contingencies.

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